



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Jacksonville District

NEWS RELEASE

Release No.: NR0809

For Release: 1 Feb 2008

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SUSPENDS PERMIT OF CYPRESS CREEK TOWN CENTER DEVELOPERS

PASCO COUNTY, Fla. -- In the wake of two incidents involving the discharge of muddy water into Cypress Creek, a protected Pasco County stream, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has suspended its permit for construction of Cypress Creek Town Center, a large retail complex now under construction by Sierra Properties developers.

The permit suspension means that the developer can no longer discharge fill into jurisdictional wetlands contained in the project area.

The Cypress Creek Town Center site is at the junction of State Road 56 and I-75 in Pasco County. The site is adjacent to Cypress Creek, which is designated by the state as an Outstanding Florida Water.

On Jan. 24, 2008 Corps staff received emailed complaints from local citizens that muddy water was entering Cypress Creek from the Town Center construction site. Corps staff inspected the site that day and confirmed that turbid water was being discharged from the construction site into Cypress Creek.

That incident followed a similar discharge, which occurred last September, for which the Corps cited Sierra Properties and is now seeking administrative penalties.

"We have issued a second notice of noncompliance to Sierra Properties for this most recent episode," said Thomas Farrell, the Corps enforcement biologist for this case. "This time, however, the



notice will be followed up with a notice of permit suspension. We feel that permit suspension is warranted because of the developer's apparent inability to ensure that the construction site will not contaminate Cypress Creek."

Turbid or muddy water discharged into creeks and rivers can result in significant environmental damage as suspended silt and other soil components settle out downstream. Silt can interfere with light penetration to aquatic plants and can harm fish by clogging their gills or killing their food.

Cypress Creek Town Center has been a high-profile project, the environmental impacts for which included more than 50 acres fill in wetlands.

According to Army Corps of Engineers documents, the Corps' decision to issue a permit for Cypress Creek Town Center was based strongly on the applicant's project design specifications and assurances, which claimed that construction at the site, would not adversely affect Cypress Creek by way of offsite discharges.

For further information, please visit our web site at www.saj.usace.army.mil and click on the Cypress Creek link from the home page: <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/regulatory/hotTopics.htm>.

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